

May 2001

ACCESS LETTER

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities

CVS Agrees to Remove Barriers in 324 Massachusetts Stores

Massachusetts Attorney General Thomas Reilly announced in April that his office had reached an agreement with the CVS drugstore chain to improve access for customers with disabilities. They will be required to remove barriers in 324 CVS stores throughout Massachusetts.

After receiving numerous complaints about CVS store aisles that were impassable to customers who use wheelchairs, Reilly's Disability Rights Project joined with the Massachusetts Office on Disability to investigate. Last fall, the two agencies surveyed CVS stores in over 20 eastern Massachusetts communities, including Cambridge. Access violations were found in every single store surveyed, including aisles that were less than three feet wide and aisles that contained display or merchandise racks that blocked the path of travel. After learning of these access violations, CVS reportedly has agreed with Reilly's office to correct the problems.

"It is good business for stores like CVS to welcome all of its customers," Reilly said. "This agreement with CVS is part of this office's ongoing commitment to ensuring that all citizens of the Commonwealth are able to participate fully in all aspects of everyday life."

The local disability community reacted enthusiastically to the CVS agreement. "As a motorized scooter user and a frequent customer of CVS, I am very pleased that they have agreed to make their stores compliant with the ADA," said Jim Biggar, chair of Access Cambridge. "This is especially important since many of their customers with disabilities must use the CVS pharmacies to obtain prescription drugs. I am particularly impressed with the store in Harvard Square, where, with limited space, they have made the store more user-friendly." "We applaud the work of Attorney General Reilly," said Massachusetts Office on Disability director Lorraine Greiff. "This agreement sends a clear message that people with disabilities should have the same opportunities to shop in their local stores as everyone else. Stores have an obligation to keep their aisles clear of barriers like display racks and merchandise in order to ensure accessible paths of travel for everyone."

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and state access requirements, stores like CVS are required to maintain all aisles a minimum of 36 inches wide. During the access surveys of CVS stores last year, the aisles often measured less than the required 36 inches, including some that were just 28 inches wide. Aisles with less than 36 inches do not accommodate customers who use wheelchairs or have other mobility impairments.

Under the agreement between the Reilly's office and CVS, which was filed in Suffolk Superior Court, CVS must:

- Maintain aisles and turning radiuses immediately with a 36-inch clearance;

- Remove barriers, such as special promotional racks, immediately where readily achievable;
- Develop and implement, within 60 days, new written policies and procedures to maintain aisle width and turning radiuses;
- Issue a directive to its managers to comply with state and federal disability access laws;
- Monitor its Massachusetts stores quarterly for two years;
- Develop and implement a training program for Massachusetts CVS employees on disability-related issues, including access requirements under state and federal law.

Anyone with a complaint about CVS store access should call the Disability Rights Project at (617) 727-2200, extension 2939.

Assistant AG Anthony Rodriguez and paralegal Susan Tufts of AG Reilly's Disability Rights Project handled the case, with help from Assistant AG Louisa Terrell and Investigator Monique Cascarano, and Jeff Dougan and Myra Berloff of the Massachusetts Office on Disability.

New Speech-to-Speech Service Provided by MassRelay

Speech-to-Speech (STS) is a new service being offered by Massachusetts Relay. Most of us are familiar with TTY service that relays calls between someone who is deaf or hard of hearing and uses a text telephone (telecommunication device for the deaf) and a person using a voice phone. Now, specially trained STS operators are available to revoice conversations for people who have difficulty being understood by others on the telephone. This STS service can be used by anyone with a speech disability or anyone who wants to call someone with a speech disability. STS calls can be placed by people who use digital voice synthesizers, voice enhancers, sound boards and electric larynx devices. They can also use STS to communicate with someone who uses a TTY.

Using STS is easy. Just dial 1-800-439-0183 or 7-1-1 and tell the operator you want to make an STS call. You will be connected to a specially trained STS operator. There is no added charge to use this STS service. To place a long distance call, the user must state their preferred long distance carrier. For more information, contact the Customer Service at 1-800-720-3480 TTY or 1-800-720-3479 voice or check the web site www.massrelay.com. (excerpted from MassRelay Newsletter, Spring 2001 Issue)

Upcoming Events of Interest to the Disability Community

May 1-31

Find the Golden Shoes / Celebrate Cambridge as a Walking City - campaign coordinated by the Cambridge Public Health Department and others to encourage residents to leave their cars parked, walk or roll to wherever they need to go, get important exercise and enjoy the scenery. One hundred golden shoes will be hidden - in places accessible to folks in wheelchairs - throughout the City where people stroll - along the river, neighborhoods, walking paths, parks, etc. Find one of these specially marked shoes, turn it in for a pair of Saucony walking shoes, and be entered in the drawing on June 2 for a Grand Prize Walking Shopping Spree of Cambridge.

May 6

Stepping Into the Night: Stroll for Mental Illness Awareness on this Sunday afternoon begins at 1 p.m. at the Ruth Gordon Amphitheater on Merrymont Ave. in Quincy, MA. Event will include speakers, poetry reading, music, food and activities for children, all in effort to reduce the stigma associated with

mental illness. Sponsored by Vinfen (www.vinfen.org); contact Michelle LaPierre-Donovan at 781-331-9824 for more information.

May 8

Supreme Court, the ADA, State Laws and Employment Rights: What We Need to Know, an audio conference so you can obtain information and participate without traveling. Features Stan Eichner of the Disability Law Center and other disability rights leaders from around New England. Registration is \$30 per site. For more information contact Kathy Gips at Adaptive Environments, 800-949-4232 v/tty or kgips@adaptenv.org.

May 9

Parenting a Teen with Special Needs, presentation by child psychiatrist Dr. Arnie Kerzner, 7-9 p.m. at Leventhal-Sidman Jewish Community Center, 333 Nahanton Street in Newton. Pre-registration is recommended as space is limited; JCC members \$5, non-members \$10. For more information call Judy Pearl 617-558-6508 or Nancy Rottman 617-558-6507 at JCC, Nancy Present at 781-341-2016, x201 at Striar JCC, or Myra Korin 508-879-3300 at Metrowest JCC.

May 10

CCPD Monthly Meeting, 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor conference room, 5:30 p.m.

May 12

Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Massachusetts Annual Convention, at Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Leominster, MA from 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. Keynote speakers are Dr. Donald Goff, Freedom Trail Clinic in Boston and Dir. of Clinical Pharmacology at Mass. General Hospital 's Schizophrenia Program, and Dr. Edward Ginns, Dir. of Brudnick Neuropsychiatric Research Institute, U. Mass Medical School in Worcester. Program includes workshops. For more information call 780-938-4048.

May 16

Women Maximizing Abilities Now, peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities and/or chronic conditions meets at The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 2-3:30 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Wheelchair accessible; contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or woman@braintrust.org for more information.

May 16-17

Community Access Monitor Training in Andover, MA. At South Church, 41 Central St. Learn how to help your community become more accessible by signing up for this workshop presented by the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD). Two-day program, 9 am - 4:30 pm, covers regulations of the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board (MAAB), the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and hands-on practice taking measurements during site surveys. Fee is \$15 for consumers, \$75 for professionals; lunch included both days. Registration DEADLINE is two weeks prior to the event if you are requesting accommodations (large print, Braille, sign language interpreters), otherwise it is 1 week. For more information, contact MOD at 617-727-7440 voice/TTY or 800-322-2020 voice/TTY. This is a scent free event; please do NOT wear perfume, after-shave, cologne, etc. This Training will be repeated around the state at various places:

June 6-7 in Dedham

Sept. 25-26 in Worcester

Oct. 24-25 in Abington

Nov. 13-14 in Cambridge, hosted by CCPD

May 17

LD/AD/HD Advocacy Group for persons with Learning Disabilities/ Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is sponsored by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and meets at MRC Somerville Area Office of, 5 Middlesex Ave, in Somerville the 3rd Thursday of each month. Support group meets 12-1 p.m.; task force meets 1-3:15 p.m. For more information contact Linn Morrill at Linn.Morrill@MRC.state.ma.us or call 617-204-3723, or Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 voice / 617-497-5257 fax.

May 18

The Autism Spectrum: Living and Learning, seminar from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. for parents presented by Autism Support Center of Danvers at Crowne Plaza Hotel, 2 Forbes Road in Woburn. Registration (\$60) deadline is May 4; covers lunch. For details call Gail Kastorf, 978-777-9135, x248.

May 18

Making Work Work for People with Mental Illness seminar presents research and program design for structures and supports to help people with mental illness find and maintain employment. Presented by ICI and Minnesota DHS/Division of Mental Health, 9:30 a.m.- 12 noon at U. Mass Boston, Wheatley Building, Room 005. Registration fee of \$10 is due 2 weeks in advance. Sponsored by Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) and the Disability Law Center (DLC). Contact Evelyn Reyes at 617-355-5371 voice / 355-96956 TTY or evelyn.reyes@tch.harvard.edu for more information or check www.childrenshospital.org/ici.

May 23

Access Advisory Committee for the MBTA 1 - 3:30 p.m. at State Transportation Building, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, 2nd floor conference Rooms 2-3. Call 617-973-7507 voice 617-973-7089 tty for more information or to request interpreters. Having problems with your RIDE service? Call 617-222-5123 voice or 617-222-5415 TTY.

June 6-7

Community Access Monitor Training in Dedham, MA. at the Town Hall, 26 Bryant Street. (see May 16-17 listing for more detail) Registration DEADLINE (\$15 for consumers, \$75 for professionals; lunch included both days) is two weeks prior to the event if you are requesting accommodations (large print, Braille, sign language interpreters), otherwise it is 1 week. This is a scent free event; please do NOT wear perfume, after-shave, cologne, etc. For more information, contact MOD at 617-727-7440 voice/tty or 800-322-2020 voice/tty. This training will be repeated around the state at various places:

Sept. 25-26 in Worcester

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Nov. 13-14 in Cambridge, hosted by CCPD

June 6

Women Maximizing Abilities Now, peer support group for women with physical or emotional disabilities and/or chronic conditions meets at The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge, 2-3:30 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of each month. Wheelchair accessible; contact Mary Quinn at 617-354-8807 or woman@braintrust.org for more information.

June 7

2nd Annual Jeanne V. Burton Advocacy Award presentation at noon in the Ballroom of the Cambridge Citywide Senior Center to Kaethe Peters. Through the Community Schools of Cambridge, Ms. Peters has introduced a program to teach music skills to students with special needs at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. For more information call 617-349-6220.

June 14

CCPD Monthly Meeting, 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor conference room, 5:30 p.m.

June 15

ELA Foundation Scholarship application deadline for women with disabilities who are pursuing graduate study to Change the Face of Disability on the Planet. One to two scholarships (worth \$2000 each) will be awarded in August. Contact Deborah Lewis at executivedirector@ela.org or 626-398-8840 voice/relay or contact ELA at 2460 North Lake Ave, PMB #128, Altadena, CA 91001 or www.ela.org for more information.

June 20

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June 20-23

Society for Disability Studies 14th Annual Conference will be held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA. This year's focus will be on "Democracy, Diversity & Disability." Sessions include Entrepreneurship and Disability, International Perspective on Disability Studies: the Promotion of Inclusion of People with Disabilities, Disability Legislation in Various Countries, and Getting Disability Studies on the University Agenda. Registration is \$195 for members, \$270 non-members, single day and student rates available. For more information contact Society for Disability Studies at 312-996-4664 v/tty or www.uic.edu/orgs/sds, Carol Gill at cg16@uic.edu, or Canadian Centre on Disability Studies, www.escape.ca/~ccds

June 21

LD/AD/HD Advocacy Group meets at MRC Somerville Area Office, 5 Middlesex Ave, in Somerville. Support group meets 12-1 p.m. and task force meets 1-3:15 p.m. For more information contact Linn Morrill at Linn.Morrill@MRC.state.ma.us or 617-204-3723, or Angelica Sawyer at 617-661-3117 voice or 617-497-5257 Fax.

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